

come up with something that is more workable.

I argue, however, that no matter what my colleagues think about the House proposal, we can all agree that the Senate should have the chance to consider welfare reauthorization under regular order, and soon. If we are allowed to debate welfare reform in this body, I am confident we could come up with a bipartisan agreement that truly advances our shared goal of making work pay more than welfare.

The motion I will offer tomorrow would urge conferees to give the Senate a chance to do just that, by rejecting provisions related to the reauthorization of TANF. Instead, the motion I will offer would urge that the Congress enact freestanding legislation that builds on the bipartisan Senate Finance Committee PRIDE bill.

I cannot emphasize enough that the Senate bill was reported out of the Finance Committee on a bipartisan basis. The House bill, on the other hand, has consistently enjoyed the support of only one party. Further, welfare reform should not be considered in the whirlwind of budget reconciliation. Reform should be based on sound policy, and we should seek to find bipartisan consensus on this most important issue, something I am confident we can do.

Tomorrow, when the motion to instruct is offered, I urge and invite my colleagues, both Democratic and Republican, to support it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 30 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator is recognized for 30 minutes.

PATRIOT ACT

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, one of the major items that we will be taking up prior to the end of the year is the issue of the renewal of the so-called USA PATRIOT Act. There was quite an effort in the last couple of years in the Senate to try to fix the problems with the PATRIOT Act that led me to vote against it originally. That was a very difficult time, obviously, after 9/11/2001. The PATRIOT Act got through on a very accelerated basis, and a number of us identified serious problems that other people didn't have a chance to analyze at the time. But the situation now has changed. We have had years to look at this. Thankfully, the Senate worked together to do its job on this bill.

In the Judiciary Committee and in the Senate as a whole, we passed changes to the USA PATRIOT Act, along with renewing the provisions scheduled to sunset at the end of this year. It was a unanimous vote. People from very different philosophies came together and said: Let's get this right. Let's make sure law enforcement has

the power and the ability to go after the terrorist network. But, at the same time, let's do what we have to do to protect the civil liberties and rights of absolutely law-abiding Americans.

Sadly, the conference committee did just the reverse. The conference committee ignored the will of the Senate. The conference committee did not make changes in critical areas such as library records and business records, so-called sneak-and-peek searches, and national security letters, changes that were essential to reaching the changes that were agreed to in the Senate. I didn't think the Senate version did as much to protect civil liberties and the rights of innocent Americans as we should have, but it was a move in the right direction. Regrettably, the conference report is nothing of the kind.

I join Senator SUNUNU, who spoke eloquently about this earlier today, in saying that the conference report that will be before the Senate is not acceptable in its current form. The conference committee needs to go back to the drawing board and make the changes that are needed. The changes are very easy to find. They were contained in the unanimously approved Senate reauthorization bill.

Clearly, there will be much more to say about this as the week goes on, but we are prepared to use whatever means we are allowed to use under the Senate rules to try to prevent this conference report from becoming law in its current form.

IRAQ

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, over the past few months, I have addressed the Senate on a number of occasions about the administration's flawed Iraq policies. I have discussed a number of problems with those policies. But the most important problem is that they are undermining our ability to counter a wide range of transnational threats that face our country. In too many cases, these threats have been overlooked or insufficiently addressed because of this administration's misguided emphasis on policies in Iraq.

Today I will explain why we need to refocus our national security strategy on the global campaign against terrorist networks, and I will briefly identify five areas on which we need to focus. A clear, targeted strategy to strengthen our national security is not an option but a necessity in the face of the growing threats posed by jihadist terrorist networks. The President is spending a lot of time talking about success in Iraq. Unfortunately, he fails to recognize that success in Iraq will not be achieved by a massive and indefinite U.S. military presence. He appears to fail to understand the limited role that the U.S. military can play in Iraq's long-term political and economic reconstruction efforts. I am afraid to say, he fundamentally fails to understand that success in Iraq, as important as it is, is secondary to success in

our larger campaign against global terrorists. Iraq—simply put—is not the be all and end all of our national security.

Our brave service men and women won a resounding victory in the initial military operation in Iraq. They have performed magnificently under very difficult circumstances. Now their task is largely over. The current massive U.S. military presence, without a clear strategy and a flexible timetable to finish the military mission in Iraq, is actually fueling the insurgency and will ultimately prevent the very economic and political progress that the Iraqis are demanding and that the President has started to talk about in his speeches. This isn't a strategy for success in Iraq or a strategy for success in the fight against global terrorism. That is why we need a flexible timeline for meeting clear benchmarks and also withdrawing U.S. troops.

I am not talking about an artificial timetable, a phrase the President likes to use. I am calling for a public, flexible timetable with clear benchmarks. I have suggested the end of December 2006 as a target date for completion of that mission. But I have made clear that any date will have to be flexible to respond to unforeseen circumstances.

The administration has a unique opportunity this week to set our Iraq policy on track. Iraqis will return to the polls on December 15 to choose their leaders. Spelling out a plan for the timely withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq will signal U.S. support for an autonomous, independent, and self-sustaining Iraqi government. There is no better way to empower the new Iraqi government and the Iraqi people than by showing that the U.S. military mission in Iraq is not indefinite. If we don't heed the advice of a growing chorus of experts to set a timetable for withdrawal, it will be impossible to recenter our priorities and reengage in the global campaign against terrorist networks.

And that is what we need to do in order to defeat those networks.

We have not kept our eye on the ball, Mr. President. We have focused on Iraq to the exclusion of these critical priorities, and we have done so at our peril. It is far past time for us to engage in a serious dialogue about the threats we face, and come up with a tough, comprehensive national security strategy to defeat them.

What are these threats and where do they come from? As we all know, the jihadist network is global in its reach, and it is showing no signs of slowing its recruitment and organization in every region of the world. Since we waged war against the Taliban in the fall of 2001—a war I supported, by the way—we have seen the network of extremist jihadist movements proliferate throughout the world. We have seen it surface in Madrid, London, Amman, Bali, and in places such as the Philippines, Algeria, Pakistan, Somalia, and Nigeria. And while it has spread throughout the world, it holds certain